

ADA \ CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY PRESENTS
LINES THROUGH TIME A SOLO EXHIBITION BY FOSTER SAKYIAMAH
17 NOVEMBER 2022 – 15 JANUARY 2023

ADA Contemporary is very pleased to present a solo exhibition, *Lines Through Time*, featuring a stunning new body of work by Noldor Alumni, Foster Sakyiamah, born in 1983. This is a historically significant moment within Sakyiamah's career as this will be recognized as the artist's first solo exhibition in Accra, Ghana; the city which he has called home for nearly 36 years where he also attended the famous Ghanatta College of Art & Design.



Foster Sakyiamah, *Odo Yewu Marigold*, Acrylic on canvas 200cm by 180cm, 2022,

“My constant intrigue around capturing women stems from being brought up in a strong matrilineal environment and being raised by a strong matriarch – I feel this is translated in my work.” -Sakyiamah

In his vibrantly distinct pallet and deeply recognizable concentric patterns, Foster looks towards history in reimagining some of the most recognizable paintings throughout 20th century contemporary art history; from Gauguin's 'The Seed of the Areoi' to Johannes Vermeer's 'Girl with a Pearl Earring'. We find that this adopted sense of celebrating 'the feminine' and multidimensional male gaze is a motif that continues within the artist's practice.

Sakyiamah's paintings are praised for their vivid depictions of the people and culture of Ghana. They are instantly recognizable for their vibrant colour palettes and predominance of curved linear patterns. Sakyiamah's fascination in the work of Malian photographer Malick Sidibé and Ghanaian-British photographer James Barnor, who frequently dressed his subjects in patterned clothing and positioned them against highly patterned backdrops and floors, led to his fondness for patterns.

In Akosua As Desire [2022] for example, the stunning composition indicative of Gauguin's The Seed of the Areoi captures a scintillating figure of Ghanaian girl whose black body is passionately depicted by Sakyiamah in monochromatic red skin seated in the nude. Holding what appears to be a mango, the protagonist is placed on a table covered with cloth as though to be served to the viewer with a basket of succulent fruit in the foreground as blue contrasting mountainous flora linger in the background. In this sense, the strong sense of tones and vibrancy hues become sensory metaphors for independence, nurture, and femineity within his acrylic paintings.

In earlier years, he was originally exhibiting his works in a local kiosk in 2002 after his tenure at Ghanatta, the artist joined the esteemed Noldor Residency Program as an artist-in-residence in 2021 after the institution's Selection Committee conducted a studio visit in late 2020. He has since had major international exhibitions in New York and Switzerland, and subsequently his work is now found in several institutional and private collections in Europe, including the Se Tinat Collection in Spain, Minotti Seoul Collection in Seoul and the Sir David Adjaye Private Collection in Accra and London. The complicated, whirling paintings that make up Foster's collection of work are often grounded by a single colour with a variation in execution. The Ghanaian artist uses reds, blues, and modest women in wide-brimmed hats and thin lace gloves, as well as dancers performing in coordinated synchrony. The figures emerge through fields of pulsing, coiled lines that give the dynamic pieces character and vitality.

They are dressed in apparel that fades into the background. But as we study Sakyiamah in studio we also see that his work ethnocentrically grounded print references to GTP, Ghana's first indigenous textile branch launched in 1966 by Ghana's first president – Dr Kwame Nkrumah. Embraced by many Ghanaian women [diaspora and local alike] in all walks of modern 'Afropolitan' society, the allusions to Ghana Textile Print truly make Sakyiamah's body of work both international and local compositions completely relatable. Ultimately whether its depicting Ghanaian women doing nothing elegantly in repose or purposefully presented within the context of high society, we find that Sakyiamah's work truly celebrates and seeks to uplift women within the lens of what he describes as "empowering objectification". We continue to see him achieve this in his uplifting aesthetic interpretation defined by signature motifs and texture –with the distinct bold lines that continue to inform his riveting practice.

Curatorial Statement by Joseph Awuah-Darko

ABOUT

Foster Sakyiamah

Foster Sakyiamah (b. 1983, Ghana) is an emerging contemporary artist based in Accra, Ghana. Instantly recognizable for their vibrant color palette and preponderance of curved linear patterns, Sakyiamah's paintings are celebrated as exuberant portrayals the people and culture of Ghana. The intense graphic quality of his compositions is an expression of Sakyiamah's appreciation for popular culture, as well as a reflection of his own interests in the history and principles of design. The energy and dynamism that defines Sakyiamah's canvases is heightened by his deft juxtaposition of complementary forces.

His precise and hard-edged portrayal of human figures is contrasted with his elegant and lyrical use of gestural lines. His rich and luxurious palette of black and brown flesh tones mingles with a luminous and bright rainbow of background hues. Finally, the objective sense of reality conveyed by the perfectly rendered human figures is juxtaposed against the symbolic and purely abstract patterns, lines and forms enveloping their world. Most captivating of all perhaps is the exactitude of Sakyiamah's craft. The graphic flatness that defines his pictures from afar is juxtaposed sublimely with the lush and painterly impasto texture of his painted surfaces when viewed up close.

ADA \ contemporary art gallery

Based in Accra, Ghana, ADA \ contemporary art gallery specializes in the work of emerging artists across Africa and its diaspora. Established in 2020 by contemporary African art advisor Adora Mba, ADA is committed to nurturing Ghana and the continent's contemporary art community and to fostering its ties and influence amongst global audiences.

Highlighting individual early career artistic practices, the gallery's program includes dedicated solo exhibitions; offsite projects and exhibitions; site-specific commissions; talks; creative partnerships and philanthropic activities with local actors; and international art fairs.

Contact: info@ada-accra.com